Restoration and Inventory Strategy of Select Streamside, Spring, and Seep Riparian Areas on the Minidoka Ranger District in FY11

Introduction - The riparian trend summary for the five year monitoring report identified several sites on the Minidoka Ranger District as being in a stable fair/poor and/or declining condition. Persistent impacts were believed to be from grazing, dispersed recreation, water developments, roads, and drought. The five year report also showed that a high percentage of spring/seep (lentic) areas have moderate to high deviation from potential natural community from grazing and water developments. The following briefly describes what management actions and additional monitoring the Sawtooth National Forest will take in FY11 and beyond to address identified concerns in the five year monitoring report.

Streamside Riparian Areas

- Implementation of Forest Plan guideline RAGU02[i] on Lake Fork Creek (Horse Pasture) where streamside riparian inventories/monitoring indicate livestock grazing has contributed to significant impairment of streamside across the pasture and/or allotment.
- Complete additional assessments in FY 11of sites (e.g. North Fork Sublett, South Fork Sublett, etc.) impacted by water developments, roads, and recreation to further evaluate what may be causing the perceived impairment and determine what additional measures need to be taken to improve each site.

Seeps and Springs Riparian Areas

Restoration Emphasis - Restoration treatments of impaired sites will first be focused on grazing allotments that occur in high priority drainages identified by the Forest's Watershed Aquatic Recovery Strategy (WARS), high priority areas for sage grouse recovery, and drainages with 303 (d) impaired waterbodies. Restoration in subsequent years will then proceed to lower priority sites. Restoration priorities could be adjusted upon further field reviews of impaired sites. Priorities at this time include:

Spring Name	Spring ID	QUAD	Division	HUC5	Watershed Name	Allotment	Pasture name
	041401CA0050	Ibex Peak	Cassia	1704021103	Beaverdam-Birch	GOOSE CREEK C&H	Lone Cedar/Owens Corral
	041401CA0064	Mahogany Butte	Cassia	1704021104	Hardesty-Trout-Bluff	GOOSE CREEK C&H	NE/Jay Creek
Indian Spring	041401CA0364	Rams Horn Ridge	Cassia	1704021216	Murtaugh Lake	COAL PIT C&H	Indian Spring
Lunch Spring	041401CA0491	McMullen Basin	Cassia	1704021218	Cottonwood Creek	ROCK CREEK C&H	North Hopper
Cherry Spring	041401CA0535	Timber Butte	Cassia	1704021310	Horse-Hot-Shoshone	TUNNEL HILL C&H	Tunnel Hill
Blue Mud Spring	041401CA0622	Pike Mountain	Cassia	1704021311	Upper Shoshone Creek	ROCK CREEK C&H	Shoshone
Horse Spring	041401CA0682	Timber Butte	Cassia	1704021311	Upper Shoshone Creek	TUNNEL HILL C&H	Tunnel Hill
	041401CA0691	Timber Butte	Cassia	1704021311	Upper Shoshone Creek	BIG CREEK C&H	Big Creek
Black Hills Spring	041401RR0001	Dennis Hill	Raft River	1602030817	Dove Creek	ROSETTE C&H	Black Hills
	041401RR0007	Lynn Reservoir	Raft River	1602030817	Dove Creek	CLARKS BASIN S&G	Clarks Basin
	041401RR0086	Buck Hollow	Raft River	1704021007	Junction Creek	WEST END C&H	Lynn Seeding

Restoration Actions - Restoration at high priority sites may include one or more of the following actions:

- Repairing/Installing float valves or overflows on water troughs to ensure spring flow does not run when not needed or water returns to channel
- Relocating water troughs away from springs to ensure they are protected
- Where needs are identified repair/construct spring exclosure fences

Additional Actions: In addition to the restoration actions listed above, the Forest would complete the following:

- Implement revised Forest Plan standard RAST03 to read - New water developments, corrals, and other handling or loading facilities shall not be located within RCAs unless it can be demonstrated that these facilities maintain or allow for restoration of beneficial uses and native and desired non-native fish habitat (same as current standard). Replaced existing water developments or facilities will be moved out of RCA unless no other options exist or it can be demonstrated that these facilities maintain or allow for restoration of beneficial uses and native and desired non-native fish habitat (new wording).

Additional data at moderate and high disturb locations from the 2008 surveys (i.e. specific restoration action, necessary clearances, etc.) will be gathered in FY 2011. Necessary materials will also be acquired this fiscal year.

Monitoring – Funding permitting, an inventory of springs and seeps will be conducted across the forest to establish a baseline and better determine conditions in relation to management activities. Once the baseline is established, a randomly selected set of monitoring a set of those with grazing and other management impacts where improvement is desired will be designated for long-term trend monitoring on a 3 to 5-year rotational basis. Evaluation of condition and trend for each site monitored will be determined after each consecutive monitoring trip occurring after establishment of the baseline. Select streamside riparian areas will also be evaluated for trend across the Forest. These will not only include sites monitored for the five year monitoring report, but additional sites (i.e. DMAs, etc.) where riparian trend can be determined.

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[i] Forest Plan Guideline RAGU02:

RAGU02 - In cattle allotments where riparian area restoration is an objective, grazing systems should be designed to incorporate the following parameters where appropriate:

a) Provide residual vegetative cover (at least 6 inches of hydric vegetation) either through regrowth or rest treatments for at least 75 percent of the years in a rotation cycle.
b) Reduce the duration of riparian area grazing periods where needed. Grazing period reduction may be especially needed in the fall where riparian deciduous woody species are an important riparian vegetation component.
c) Design grazing periods to take advantage of favorable seasonal livestock dispersal behavior (examples: spring use of uplands, due to wet riparian conditions, late fall upland use, due to cold temperatures, poor dispersal during "hot" season).
d) Incorporate sufficient growing season rest to provide good vigor, physiological needs, and regeneration of all riparian plants.
e) Where deciduous trees and shrubs are important in the composition, modify the frequency of grazing periods, reduce the grazing duration, or reduce grazing intensity to levels that provide for recovery/maintenance of healthy, diverse trees and shrubs.